19: Marshall M-5 (ca. 1910) 1922 AP1 Burma
Karen AP7

1343 The grain is carried in baskets on the backs of the beaters (see p. 94) and is poured slowly into the bin so as not to settle compactly. Should a basket slip and fall into the bin or its contents be dashed in, a fowl must be killed and an offering made. The storing of grain must be finished as speedily as possible; but if it can not be done in one day, the workers may rest over night.

The task of storing finished, they bring an offering for "Hpi Bi Yaw," [3] consisting of a clod of earth, a morsel of rice, and a small cup of liquor. These are placed on the paddy in the bin, and a prayer of thanksgiving is said to her. After these ceremonies the cultivator feels at liberty to take grain from his store and carry it home for food.

A small supply of paddy is always put aside in a special basket for seed, each family preserving its own, which is supposed to date back to a time when its forbears had an unusually good crop in some favorable year. Only in the last extremity will a Karen eat his seed-grain. There are many varieties of rice having their special names, each cherished by particular localities and families. Hill rice is greatly prized as being more delicious than plains rice.

244 The Karen raise different kinds of vegetables in their rice-fields, such as certain varieties of gourds, beans, yams, a kind of sweet potato, and peppers of various sorts, especially the red chili so generally used for condiment. Cotton is also grown in the fields along with the rice, standing until long after the paddy has been reaped. The cotton is usually considered to be the women's crop. They tend it, gather the bolls, and carry them home. The other products of the field seem to belong to all members of a family alike. The tips of various plants are used for greens. These must be plucked with the fingers and not cut off with a sharp instrument, inasmuch as the spirits dislike their being dissevered with a knife. A few plants of cockscomb are grown in the field, the red variety ("hpaw ghaw") being preferred to the yellow, because they are supposed to dazzle the eyes of the demons and prevent their harming the crop. In the lower hills sesame is often raised for its seeds, which are threshed out and sold to the Burmese, who press the oil out of them. This is serviceable in cooking and lighting. It is said to be not unlike linseed oil in certain respects, but supplies a large amount of the fats required in curries.

245 In the Toungoo and Shwegyin Hills great quantities of betel-nuts are grown. These regions furnish, I believe, the greater part

[3] The divinity who presides over the cultivation of the paddy: see page 226.